Herd Health

BRAINWORM LIFE CYCLE
(Parelaphostrongylus tenuis)

Primary Host
Adult worm lays eggs on dura mater of deer's brain.

Worm larvae hatch, migrate to deer's lungs, are coughed up and swallowed.

Worm larvae penetrate deer's stomach wall and migrate to the spinal cord.

Worm larvae enter deer's alimentary canal and are passed through the feces.

Deer inadvertently eats infected slug or snail.

Intermediate Host
Larvae are picked up by slug or snail (gastropod) that encounter infected feces.

Elk inadvertently eats infected slug or snail.

Worm larvae travel to spinal cord and brain. Elk shows signs of abnormal behavior, emaciation, and, commonly, antler deformities in bull elk.

Elk dies (dead end host).

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